

*June 11, 2010*

This week, something interesting happened. I was down on the House floor, preparing to speak with my colleagues about bringing jobs back to hard-working Americans.

Some of my Democratic colleagues were already discussing the recent international incident, when Israel boarded a six ship flotilla attempting to head past its blockade of the Gaza strip.

I invited them to join me on the floor and, for several minutes, we continued to discuss the strong support we share for our strongest democratic ally in the Middle East.

Since 2007, the terrorist organization Hamas has virtually controlled the Gaza strip. Hamas has fired 7,000 rockets and mortars into Israel since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. Israel has blockaded Gaza in order to stop the flow of arms and shipments from Iran and other state sponsors of terrorism to Hamas. Yet, Israel has transferred more than one million tons of humanitarian supplies through its defensive blockade into Gaza in the past year and a half.

Last month, a six ship flotilla, sponsored by the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (an organization linked to Hamas), attempted to breach Israel's blockade, provoking a confrontation with the Israeli Defense forces and attacking them with weapons. Whatever policy disagreements Republicans and Democrats have with each other - and we have many - we must work together to keep the United States strong: willing and able to defend our people and our borders in this volatile world. Just as importantly, we must insist that every nation has the right to protect itself from those who wish to harm it.

I will continue to work for a stronger America and to support Israel and our other allies so that we can continue to inspire hope and freedom around the world.